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SUBJECT: VALDEZ, TELLO PEON TEAM UP ON BEYOND MERIDA

Classified By: DCM John Feeley. Reason: 1.4 (b),(d).

¶1. (S) Summary: CISEN Director Guillermo Valdez has been officially tapped by President Calderon to serve as the administration's point man for coordinating the substance of Beyond Merida exchanges between the USG and the GoM. However, Director of the National Security System, Jorge Tello Peon, remains very much engaged in an internal GoM coordination role and will continue to be a core team player, both as a USG interlocutor and a key operator in Calderon's national security apparatus. Embassy Mexico City is confident this arrangement will serve our policy purposes and, despite GOM interagency squabbling, we are optimistic we can work effectively with both officials to advance our mutual security and institutional building agenda.

¶2. (S) In an October 2 exchange, both Tello Peon and Valdez told Ambassador that the two had been instructed by President Calderon to work closely with Mission Mexico and the USG in implementing current Merida Initiative projects, as well as working collaboratively on future national security and institutional building efforts under the rubric of a "Beyond Merida" joint planning effort. Valdez explained that he would have primary responsibility for working with the USG and counterparts in the Mission and U.S. interagency to frame future collaboration. He stated that the GoM was pleased with the four pillar strategy that had been worked to date and blessed by the two Secretaries. He looked forward to the individual pillar discussions over the coming weeks between the two sides. The GoM is committed to this strategic framework and agrees with the strategic focus of building lasting, non-political, transparent law enforcement and judicial institutions.

¶3. (S) Tello Peon, who had previously been Mission Mexico's main contact in the early stages of developing a post-Merida vision, explained that he was not being taken off the assignment by President Calderon. Rather, his role will be to focus the Mexican interagency to achieve optimal coordination and minimize turf battles. He and Valdez will work closely together. Both pledged to the Ambassador their complete cooperation, and their appreciation of the Obama Administration's genuine commitment to the growing US-Mexican security partnership.

¶4. (S) Comment: This definition of duties between Los Pinos (Tello Peon) and CISEN (Valdez) will serve us well as we move forward. Despite significant chatter in intelligence channels in the days leading up to the September 26 meeting in New York between Secretary Clinton and Secretary Espinosa, it is clear that both officials have been approved by President Calderon to work Merida and security issues. More importantly, both appear committed to a longer term vision

that includes cross-cutting institution building and creating a genuine rule of law in Mexico. At this point, Tello Peon is by far better versed in our issues, however, Valdez gives every indication of coming quickly up to speed. The unknowns are whether PGR, SEGOB, SEDENA, SRE and SSP principals have all been briefed by the President and whether they are willing to follow his new bureaucratic organizational paradigm in practice. Visit Mexico City's Classified Web Site at <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/mexicocity> and the North American Partnership Blog at <http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/nap/>

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